

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims:

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected all of pending claims.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 3 and 6 have been amended solely for stylistic and/or grammatical purposes. No new matter has been introduced, and thus, entry and consideration of this Amendment are respectfully requested.

II. Claim Objections:

Claim 1 was objected to because of stated informalities. In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 accordingly herein. Applicants believe that the amendment provides the “clarity and precision” required by the Examiner, and the objection should now be withdrawn.

III. Response to 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections:

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,571,022 to Okisu, *et al.* (hereafter “Okisu”) in view of EP 1,037,458 to Lin (hereafter “Lin”).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s rejections to the extent that such rejections may be considered applicable to the claims. In an effort to clarify the claimed features, Applicants have amended the language of claims 1, 3 and 6 solely to effect stylistic and/or grammatical modifications. Thus, it is believed that the substance of the claims has not been changed. Amended claim 1 recites:

“An image sensing apparatus comprising:

an image sensing element having a first light receiving area and a second light receiving area which are formed on an image pickup surface of a semiconductor substrate by a plurality of divisional exposure operations;

a correction device configured to correct a pixel signal output from said image sensing element; and

a control device configured to control said correction device to multiply a correction value to pixel signals read out from the first light receiving area and the second light receiving area via a same channel and to write the pixel signals to which the correction value is multiplied to a frame memory as pixel data of a captured image, wherein

said correction device corrects the pixel signal output from said image sensing element so that a difference between the pixel signals read out from the first light receiving area and the second light receiving area is canceled.”

The Okisu reference discloses an image processing apparatus for the synthesis of a plurality of partial images, wherein one partial image being partially overlapped over another partial image in a boundary portion is reduced into a single image bearing the entirety of an object image. Several synthesizing manners may be performed to synthesize a left boundary image and a right boundary image to generate a single boundary image.

Applicants assert that Okisu does not teach or suggest, among other things, “pixel signals read out from the first light receiving area and the second light receiving area via a same channel,” as recited in claim 1. On the contrary, Okisu shows and describes two separate and independent CCDs (i.e. 12 and 13 in FIG. 8), wherein each CCD generates corresponding separate and independent output (i.e. two channels are shown).

In addition, the Office Action concedes that Okisu “does not explicitly teach that the light receiving areas (12 and 13) are formed on an image pickup area of a semiconductor substrate by a plurality of divisional exposure operations.” In an attempt to fulfill this noted deficiency in Okisu, the Office Action has cited Lin. In the Office Action, it is alleged that “Lin teaches an image device (1, figure 1) with multiple light receiving areas (Segments A, B and C, paragraph 0013),” wherein “A sensor array (3) is formed on an image sensing chip (1), which sensor array (3) contains light receiving regions A, B and C.”

Applicants respectfully disagree. Lin merely discloses that signals are read out for each segment and subsequently combined. [See FIGS. 4, 6 and 8]. Contrary to the Examiner’s allegations, Lin discloses that sensor array 3 includes a plurality of *mutually disjoint sensor segments* (i.e. segments A7, B8 and C9). Charges or voltages generated by these segments are serially output to corresponding processors A22, B24 and C26. [See, e.g., Lin, ¶¶ 0013 and 0018]. In contrast, in accordance with at least one embodiment, claim 1 recites *inter alia* “an image sensing element having a first light receiving area and a second light receiving area which are formed on an image pickup surface of a semiconductor substrate by a plurality of divisional exposure operations.” Emphasis added.

Further to the above discussion, Applicants submit that none of Okisu or Lin disclose or suggest “pixel signals read out from the first light receiving area and the second light receiving area via a same channel... wherein said correction device corrects the pixel signal output from said image sensing element so that a difference between the pixel signals read out from the first light receiving area and the second light receiving area is canceled,” as recited in claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references. Claim 6 recites at least similar features as those found in claim 1. As a result, independent claims 1 and 6 and claims depending thereupon are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an action to that effect is kindly solicited.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-5154.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No 13-4500, Order No. 1232-5154.

Respectfully submitted,
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